

Reprinted from the North American Review, No. CCIII,
for April, 1864.

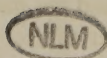
1864.

THE SANITARY COMMISSION

It has been well said by Sir John Lubbock, the first President of the Sanitary Commission, "The efficiency of our sanitary work depends upon the state of health of the people. The more healthy the people, the more efficient will be our sanitary work." In the early history of the Commission, the state of health of the people was the primary consideration, and the Commission was organized to improve the state of health of the people by the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country.

Early sanitary commissions were organized to improve the state of health of the people by the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country. It is now the duty of the Commission to improve the state of health of the people by the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country. The Commission is organized to improve the state of health of the people by the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country. The Commission is organized to improve the state of health of the people by the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country.

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It has been well said by Sir James M'Grigor, the distinguished physician-in-chief of Wellington's forces in the Peninsular campaign, that "the efficiency of an army must ever depend upon the state of health of the corps which compose it." In this light, military hygiene takes rank with the tactics and strategy of good generalship, and war becomes scarcely less a problem of sanitary science than of soldierly valor and strategic skill.

Every great campaign furnishes fresh testimony upon this subject, and proves how true it is that "the history of war can no longer be confined to bare details of the plans of battles and the manœuvres of armies," but that "we must refer to other elements, and principally to the sanitary condition of troops, as the causes of our victories or the reasons for our disasters."* These are considerations of momentous importance in the present great war.

Our hastily organized armies for the suppression of the rebellion unquestionably present the largest and most important field that the history of the world has yet afforded for the practical elucidation of the utility and the varied applications of sanitary science as a life-saving and conservative power in active military operations; and we may justly claim as one of the important elements of our military success, and as one of the most Christian and impressive features of our terrible

* The British Army and Miss Nightingale. By Charles Shrimpton, M. D., late Surgeon-Major in the French Army. London: Bailliere Brothers. 1864.

struggle, that this science, in its broadest and most humane applications, has been directly brought to bear upon the Federal forces during the entire period of the war.

In a former paper an outline of the plan and purposes of the United States Sanitary Commission was given, and some of the leading facts relating to its origin, principles, and early struggles were set forth. In the following pages we propose to unfold the scheme of its operations, and to examine into the nature, methods, and results of its labors with reference to their relations to the national cause and the people's concern in it, and also with reference to the influence of these labors upon sanitary science and its humane objects.

The special committee of delegates that procured the ordering and organization of the Sanitary Commission was sent to the national capital by volunteer associations that were engaged in preparing the means of succor and aid to victims of disease and wounds, and it was plainly the purpose of those delegates to make the consideration of *preventive sanitary measures* paramount to all questions of *relief*. This fact was illustrated by the official Order which the committee secured from General Scott, at their very first interview at Washington, requiring a reinspection of the volunteer regiments for the purpose of eliminating worthless elements that would only impede military operations and crowd the hospitals.

In what manner and to what extent the idea, purpose, and plan of forecasting and preventive concern and humane succor for the sick and wounded of the army were combined in the counsels that gave birth to the Sanitary Commission, is well illustrated in the following statement, which was presented to the Secretary of War by the committee of delegates in their preliminary address on the day of their first assembling in Washington. This statement clearly foreshadows a scheme of preventive sanitary service and direct relief, which those delegates designed should be commensurate with the claims of humanity and the advanced civilization and science of the age.

"The present is essentially a people's war. The hearts and minds, the bodies and souls, of the whole people, and of both sexes, throughout the loyal States, are in it. . . .

“Convinced by inquiries made here of the practical difficulty of reconciling the aims of their own and numerous similar associations in other cities with the regular workings of the Commissariat and the Medical Bureau, and yet fully persuaded of the importance to the country, and the success of the war, of bringing such an arrangement about, the undersigned respectfully ask that a mixed commission of civilians, distinguished for their philanthropic experience and acquaintance with sanitary matters, of medical men, and of military officers, be appointed by the government, who shall be charged with the duty of investigating the best means of methodizing and reducing to practical service the already active, but undirected, benevolence of the people towards the army; who shall consider the general subject of the prevention of sickness and suffering among the troops, and suggest the wisest methods which the people at large can use to manifest their good-will towards the comfort, security, and health of the army.

“It must be well known to the Department of War that several such commissions *followed* the Crimean and Indian wars. The civilization and humanity of the age, and of the American people, demand that such a commission should *precede* our second war of independence,—more sacred than the first. We wish to prevent the evils that England and France could only investigate and deplore. This war ought to be waged in a spirit of the highest intelligence, humanity, and tenderness, for the health, comfort, and safety of our brave troops; and every measure of the government that shows its sense of this will be eminently popular, strengthen its hands, and redound to its glory at home and abroad.”

Here we have the key to the whole theory of the organization and subsequent history of the Sanitary Commission. The plan was conceived, and has been prosecuted from the first in the interest of humanity and of the national cause; and in the fifty published documents which the Commission sent forth during the first six months of its existence, we find abundant evidence of the strength and clearness of the convictions and purposes of its members in their humane and patriotic work. The men who organized the Commission were deeply impressed with the fact that, “in times past, war has been conducted in more or less forgetfulness, sometimes in total oblivion, of the fact that the soldier is a mortal man, subject to all the ills following on wet and cold, want of shelter, bad food, excessive fatigue, bad water, intemperate habits, and foul air.”

The commissioners infused into the plans of their service all that earnestness and directness of purpose which deep convictions and a definite knowledge of the importance and positive power of sanitary works could inspire. Like the British commission for revising the army medical system, they found that in our army regulations "no provision was made for systematically caring for the soldier's *health*, but only for his *sickness*." And, not forgetting the great improvements that the hospital system itself required, it was manifestly the duty of our army commission to take the view it did; namely, that it is the highest duty of the government, and of the Sanitary Commission as its voluntary aid and adviser, to employ all suitable means to preserve our volunteer armies from the ravages of *preventible* disease. Florence Nightingale and the Crimean commission found the British army in the East dying from *disease* at the rate of *sixty per cent*, or more than half the total force, per annum. They secured the ordering and enforcement of needed sanitary measures in the camps, the hospitals, and the administrative service of that shattered army; diseases fled, and the death rate was, during the last five months of the campaign, reduced to less than 12 per 1,000 (exactly 1.15 per cent), or more than *fifty-two times* less than before the introduction of sanitary reform. Fresh air, suitable food and clothing, cleanliness of person and quarters, and well-regulated habits, were the elements of that reform, and they are the fundamental elements of health and soldierly endurance in our own army. The Commission knew that the average annual death rate in armies in our former wars had been exceedingly high, and that an army of *volunteer* forces is most liable to fatal diseases. In the Mexican war, our volunteer forces lost, from disease alone, at the rate of 152 per 1,000 per annum, and the regulars at the rate of 81, from the same cause. In Wellington's entire campaign in the Peninsula, his losses from disease were 113 per 1,000 strength. In times of peace, our regular army lost annually at the rate of 26 per 1,000 strength; and the British infantry, serving at home, annually lost about 18 per 1,000 from disease, until Lord Herbert's great reforms were instituted; but by those reforms, which mainly consist in supplying fresh air and an improved diet, the annual loss

is reduced to about $8\frac{1}{2}$ per 1,000 strength ; and the entire loss in the British army during the past four years, from *all* diseases, is less than the annual loss previously from diseases of the *lungs only*.

The last official returns of sickness and mortality among the British forces present the best argument upon this subject. In Jamaica, the death rate from disease has fallen, since the recent reform was carried into effect, from 260 per 1,000 to 20 ; in Trinidad, from 106 to 0 (in 1860) ; in Barbadoes, from 58 to 6 ; in St. Lucia, from 122 to 1 ; in British Guiana, from 74 to 6 ; in Canada, from 16 to 10 ; in Nova Scotia, from 15 to 7 ; in Newfoundland, from 11 to 4 ; in Bermuda, from 28 to 8 ; in Gibraltar, from 11 to 7 ; in Malta, from 15 to 10 ; in Ionia, from 15 to 7.

In our vast armies of volunteers, the problems of sanitary science were to be wrought out as a national and patriotic work. The death rates of the Mexican campaign would imperil the national cause, and bring sorrow to every home in the land. Can the average sickness rate be kept at a minimum point ? Can the average death rate from disease be reduced to a fraction of that which was registered in the Mexican war ? This result the Commission believed possible. It was to be accomplished by *prevention* and by *succor*.

In the original scheme of organization of the United States Sanitary Commission, as presented to the Secretary of War on the 23d of May, 1861, a few days after its originators had presented their address to him, it was proposed that the general objects of the Commission should be "inquiry and advice in respect of the sanitary interests of the United States forces," with the design "to bring to bear upon the health, comfort, and *morale* of our troops the fullest and ripest teachings of sanitary science in its application to military life." This scheme of inquiry and advice, under the heads of, "1. *Materiel of the Volunteers*, 2. *Prevention*, 3. *Relief*," was to be developed and expanded as circumstances should require ; and it was wisely suggested that the outlines of the plan should be so expansible as to conform to the exigencies of the coming war and its vast armies. Under the head of *Prevention*, it was stated : —

"The Commission would inquire with scientific thoroughness into the subject of Diet, Cooking, Cooks, Clothing, Tents, Camping-grounds, Transports, Transitory Depots, with their exposures, Camp Police, with reference to settling the question, how far the regulations of the army proper are or can be practically carried out among the volunteer regiments, and what changes or modifications are desirable from their peculiar character and circumstances. Everything appertaining to outfit, cleanliness, precautions against damp, cold, heat, malaria, infection, crude, unvaried, or ill-cooked food, and an irregular or careless regimental commissariat, would fall under this head."

Supplementary supplies and aid, wherever required by the wants of sick or disabled soldiers, were to constitute the branch of *Relief* in the Commission's scheme. Inquiries were to be made concerning

"the organization of military hospitals, general and regimental; . . . the nature and sufficiency of hospital supplies; the method of obtaining and regulating all other extra supplies contributing to the comfort of the sick; the question of ambulances and field service, and of extra medical aid; and whatever else relates to the *care, relief, or cure* of the sick and wounded."

In short, the Commission's department of *Relief* was proposed for

"the organizing, methodizing, and reducing to serviceableness the vague, disproportioned, and haphazard benevolence of the public"; and "to secure uniformity of plans, and then proportion and harmony of action; and, finally, abundance of supplies in money and goods for such purposes as the laws do not and cannot provide."

Though the committee that originated and urged this scheme of humane and extra-official service had no thought of personally undertaking its complete elaboration and execution, a work in which they could not engage without great sacrifices of personal interests, yet, while urging and perfecting the plan, they became so determined and so absorbed in the work, that, when the Commission actually organized, it not only included the men who projected it, but its whole body at once became inspired with their spirit and purpose. Clothed with no other power than that which might result from their intelligence, faithfulness, and success in the discharge of their

duties of *inquiry* and *advice*, great effort was made to unite in the *personnel* of the Commission a suitable variety and excellence of scientific and administrative qualifications. Momentous duties pressed too closely to permit delay in the thorough organization and work of the Commission; so, after proper counsels and a few preliminary interviews, the Board organized and entered upon its work with the following members: Henry W. Bellows, President, New York; Prof. A. D. Bache, Vice-President, Washington; George T. Strong, Treasurer, New York; Fred. Law Olmsted, General Secretary, Washington; George W. Cullum, U. S. Army; Alexander E. Shiras, U. S. Army; Robert C. Wood, M.D., U. S. Army; William H. Van Buren, M.D., New York; Wolcott Gibbs, M.D., New York; Elisha Harris, M.D., New York; Samuel G. Howe, M.D., Boston; Cornelius R. Agnew, M.D., New York; J. S. Newberry, M.D., Cleveland, Ohio. Subsequently, in the progress of the work, the following names have been added: Rt. Rev. T. M. Clarke, Providence, R. I.; Hon. R. W. Burnett, Cincinnati; Hon. Mark Skinner, Chicago; Hon. Joseph Holt, Washington; Horace Binney, Jr., Philadelphia; Rev. J. H. Heywood, Louisville, Ky.; J. Huntington Wolcott, Boston; Prof. Fairman Rogers, Philadelphia; C. J. Stillé, Philadelphia.

Immediately after its organization the Commission entered upon a series of protracted sessions, which continued, with brief interruptions, until late in the autumn of 1861. The preventive or strictly sanitary and scientific work of the Commission was the first to receive attention, and here was brought into full operation the organizing genius of Mr. F. L. Olmsted, who had fortunately been selected as the chief executive officer of the Board. Several members of the Commission engaged in special fields of inspection or inquiry, and a corps of sanitary inspectors of camps and hospitals was immediately set at work in a systematic manner, so that, at a session immediately after the battle of Bull Run, the Board examined reports of sanitary inspections that had been made in most of the regiments both before and subsequent to that disaster. The whole scheme of the Commission's preventive service appears to have received its final shape and force at that

period. Its inspectors were placed under special instructions, and sent throughout the lines of the army, and from them were daily received full and classified returns concerning the results of their observations and efforts in the camps and hospitals; a statistical bureau was organized and placed under the care of a skilled actuary; direct and earnest correspondence was opened with the chief military authorities, and with Governors of States; the munificent and homely gifts of the people for the comfort of their soldier-sons in hospitals were received, assorted, and systematically disbursed by methods approved by the Medical Department, and thus a system of *General Relief* was established. At the same time, the endeavors to mitigate by suitable means the personal sufferings and wants of sick, needy, and ignorant volunteers, under irregular circumstances, — circumstances sadly frequent, and a class of miserable and uncared-for sufferers painfully numerous in and about Washington and other great military centres after the first battles, — led to the establishment of a branch of *Special Relief*. From the current records and publications of the Commission it plainly appears that, early in the autumn of 1861, these various methods of service had become fully organized, and were operating harmoniously, and that various incidental works in the interest of the soldier and the people had been set on foot, in addition to reformatory and relief operations of a systematic and more permanent kind.

Even before the smoke of the first collision in arms had cleared from the fields of sharp encounter in Virginia and Missouri, the Sanitary Commission was confronted by some very stern duties. By fearlessly accepting them, and expressing the convictions that had become impressed upon the minds of its members, it exerted no small influence in improving the organization, discipline, and care of our armies, and in giving tone and direction to public sentiment in favor of such improvements. The faults and short-comings of the *administrative* service in the medical and other departments of the army were pointed out, the importance of rigid discipline insisted upon, and the duty of more wisely directing the selection and appointment of commanding officers was very emphatically set forth. The remark of an old campaigner, "that a good com-

manding officer will generally have a healthy and effective regiment," and that "no regiment will ever be found healthy when the *internal economy* is bad,"* was abundantly confirmed by the observations of the Commission's sanitary inspectors of camps.

So important was it considered, in its sanitary bearings, that the highest degree of military competence should be secured in the command of the volunteer forces, that the Commission reported, through a special committee of its members, consisting of General Cullum and Professor Bache, the names and addresses of all loyal graduates of West Point who were at the time in civil life, and believed to be available for military commands in active service; and in the proceedings of the Commission, a week after the battle of Bull Run, the following Resolutions were passed:—

"*Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission, in their endeavors to promote temperance, cleanliness, and comfort among the troops, have become convinced that the first sanitary law in camp and among soldiers is *military* discipline; and that unless this is vigorously asserted and enforced, it is useless to attempt and impossible to effect, by any secondary means, the great end they propose, — which is the health and happiness of the army."

"*Resolved*, That, looking only to the health and comfort of the troops, it is our profound conviction that any special relaxation of military discipline in favor of volunteer troops, based either upon their supposed unwillingness or inability to endure it, or upon the alleged expectation of the public, is a fallacious policy, and fraught with peril to the lives of the men and the success of the national cause; and that, speaking in the name of the families and the communities from which the volunteers come, and in the name of humanity and religion, we implore that the most thorough system of military discipline be carried out with the officers and men of the volunteer force, as the first and essential condition of their health, comfort, and morality."

"*Resolved*, That the health and comfort and efficiency of the men are mainly dependent on the uninterrupted presence, the personal watchfulness, and the rigid authority of the regimental and company officers; and that all the great defects, whether in the commissariat or in the police of camps, are radically due to the absence of officers from their

* Sir James M'Grigor, in *Medico-Chirurg. Trans.*, Vol. VI. p. 471.

posts, and to the laxity of the discipline to which they are themselves accustomed."

To ascertain the prevailing causes of sickness and mortality in the army, and to endeavor to remove the sources of preventable disease, every available agency was brought to bear for the immediate and methodical application of sanitary knowledge in the camps and hospitals. At the same time, appropriate methods of relief, and a system for accumulating and dispensing the means of succor, were devised and put into operation.

The various labors in which the Commission engaged were grouped, as we have said, in two separate but co-ordinate departments, — that of preventive service and that of supplementary supply and relief, — both of which were equally inspired with the ideas of health, humanity, and patriotism. The preventive service required all the best medical talent the Commission could command, and the aid of the military members and the administrative officers of the Board; while the relief department called into its service not only the powers and peculiar experience of all the members of the Commission, but has commanded the friendly aid of the leading philanthropists of our country. In all branches, and at every stage of the work, individual members of the Commission have engaged, according to their particular qualifications, in active services and counsels, and some, by agreement, withdrew from all other occupations, and devoted themselves exclusively to the Commission's work.

Mr. Frederic Law Olmsted was placed in charge of the central office, as General Secretary of the Commission, and gave himself wholly to its executive duties, and to the work of organizing the methods of service; in this work his peculiar genius and powers of mind found an inviting but laborious field of labor, and proved themselves equal to the largest demand that the country could make upon them. So to organize the various branches of this life-saving work as to impart to each branch and to the entire system the greatest efficiency and completeness for the time, and yet to give to the several branches such separate and easily limited range that their operation should be only supplemental to regular provisions

made by government, was a leading point in the problem which the Sanitary Commission and its General Secretary must practically solve during the first months of the service. That this early policy of the Commission has been faithfully maintained, and that the great problems which engrossed its attention the first year of the war have been satisfactorily solved, the daily operations both of the *preventive* and the *relief* departments of the work abundantly testify.

It is due alike to the Sanitary Commission and to the people who support its operations to say, that this purpose to make the country's voluntary offerings of science and succor merely *supplementary*, had in it nothing of feebleness and sycophancy. Its ruling motive has always been that of manly and zealous defence and care of the soldier. That motive was thus stated in the Commission's report to the Secretary of War, in December, 1861: —

“The one point which controls the Commission is just this: a simple desire and resolute determination to secure for the men who have enlisted in this war that care which it is the will and the duty of the nation to give them. That care is their right, and, in the government or out of it, it must be given them, let who will stand in the way.”

The experience of other wars and other nations could not with any certainty guide the Sanitary Commission in its estimates of the amount of supplementary aid that would be required, nor was there any example or light to guide to the successful preparation and adoption of the needed methods of succor and assistance. The murderous waste of life and loss of armies in the Crimea, as well as the example there presented of the positive power and certainty of sanitary measures, as the means of salvation from such calamities, served as beacon-lights, and as such they were constantly in view. The Commission was strongly impressed with the facts that the destroying angel who follows in the trail of armies “exact[s] from every man to the full whatever penalties follow on the infraction of natural law”; that “the waste of human life and the destruction of human health and happiness [in time of war] have been in all ages many times greater from disease than from actual encounter in the field, and that the faithful records of all wars

are records of preventible suffering, disease, and death.”* In view of these facts, and considering also that the sick and wounded must sometimes be sacrificed to unavoidable military necessity, the Commission claimed that “all the more should they be supplied with whatever mitigation of suffering military necessities leave possible. And these should be furnished them, not as if a hard master were driving a bargain with them,—as in the commutation of a board contract,—but as if the love and pity of mothers, wives, sweethearts, and sisters were exercised with the far-seeing providence, boldness, ingenuity, tact, and industry of true military generalship.” Such were the considerations that guided, and such the spirit that inspired, the Commission in devising and working its methods of *prevention* from disease and *relief* from suffering. The *preventive* or strictly sanitary and scientific department of the work, from the first, has comprised,—1st, a corps of sanitary inspectors; 2d, a bureau of sanitary and vital statistics; 3d, the directorship of distribution of the Commission’s supplementary supplies or “sanitary stores”; 4th, the preparation and publication, for free distribution among medical and other officers, of compendious monographs upon the most practical subjects in army hygiene, surgery, and medicine. The department of *relief* is co-ordinate with that of *sanitary inspection*, and, so far as its ministrations relate directly to life and health, it is under the direction of the inspectors or medical officers of the *preventive* or sanitary department of the service; while the various branches of *relief* not thus related to the sanitary service constitute the system which is designated as that of *special relief*. All these branches of the Commission’s work, as previously remarked, sprang into operation under the original scheme of organization, and from the pressure of events during the early months of the war.

With a scheme of operations so expansible, so tentative, and yet so determined, it was the more difficult, as well as the more desirable, to methodize all branches of the work. And, notwithstanding the expectation and hope that some of the branches would soon become needless, because of increasing

* Army Sanitary Administration and its Reform under Lord Herbert. By Florence Nightingale.

improvements in army organization, and that, from the same cause, the necessity and range of even the more permanent labors of the Commission would be rendered less and less essential to the welfare of the army, the Commission adopted the policy of ordering and executing all the departments and details of its work in a most thorough and permanent manner.

The system of sanitary inspection was designed to accomplish two leading objects of nearly equal importance, viz.:—1st, to impart information and suggestions to, and also to stimulate the exertions of, military officers in matters affecting the health of the troops; 2d, to make faithful observations upon the sanitary condition and wants of the soldiers in camp and in hospital, and immediately to report upon the same to the central office of the Commission. These reports present the systematic and comparable results of such inspectorial labors, and have furnished the basis of those suggestions and reforms which the Commission has, from time to time, urged upon the government and upon military authorities.

The duties of the Sanitary Inspectors were accurately defined in a letter of special instructions from the General Secretary, and the range and leading points of inquiry were indicated in a carefully studied schedule of questions, some two hundred in number. This branch of service was put into operation as early as the month of July, 1861, and has been continued until the present time. It has recently been reinforced by valuable accessions to its corps, and it is not likely that the need of this department will cease while the war continues; for although, with the progress of events and the improvement of our armies, the functions of the inspectors have been greatly varied, they have perhaps become of still greater importance than at first.

The general plan of service marked out for the Sanitary Inspectors, during the first two years of the war, is thus laid down in the Secretary's letter of instructions: *—

“I. *Introduction, Etiquette, and Discipline.*—In the performance of

* General Instructions for Camp Inspectors. By the General Secretary of the Sanitary Commission. Document 51.

your duty as an Inspector of the Sanitary Commission, it is of the highest importance that you should, under all circumstances, be careful to show your respect for the regulations of discipline, order, and rank in the army. To this end, in the first place, take pains to approach the inferior by way of the superior officer, and only with a formal or implied approval and indorsement of your purpose by the latter.

“Unquestionably, the first of all conditions of health in the army is strict discipline. Do all, therefore, in your power to encourage and strengthen a good purpose in this respect; do all in your power to sustain it. Honor in your own conduct the strictest rules of military etiquette, and let it be seen that you expect them to be stringently enforced. Let it be known that you consider no disease so destructive to an army as laxity of discipline. Demand, wherever you properly can do so, that the standard of the volunteers shall be at least as high as that of the regulars in this respect, and reprove any intimation that this is not to be attempted. . . .

“II. *Relation with Regimental and Company Commanders.*—On arriving at the camp of a regiment, ask for the officer of the day, and, stating your business, request him to present you to the colonel or commanding officer. Exhibit your credentials to the latter, and, if the opportunity is favorable, endeavor at once to obtain his confidence and co-operation in your business. . . .

“III. *Duty of Commanders of Companies.*— . . . In our military organization the company is the unit of the army, and the commanding officers of companies are the principal agents of all the administrative duties of the organization. If a major or a lieutenant (not acting as a commander) neglects his duties, the body to which he is attached becomes simply in a certain degree less effective. If a company commander neglects his duty, the men may starve for all that any one else is to do. The captain should be, as has often been said, ‘the father of his company.’ Nothing, however small, which affects the comfort, health, strength, and efficiency of his men is beneath his attention. He is the official registrar, and agent of all necessary communication between them and the source of their supplies, as well as with the superior command. . . . Upon the thoroughness with which the captains attend to their duty, both in regard to their companies, and, each in his turn, as the officer of the day, superintending the police of the regiment, its health mainly depends. You are, therefore, instructed to make yourself acquainted with the captains, and to cultivate such relations with them as will command a hearty reception for such instruction as you may see occasion to give them.”

Thus, the Sanitary Inspectors were instructed to proceed with their duties until they should become fully possessed of all the facts bearing upon the sanitary condition and welfare of each company, each regiment, and the entire *corps d'armée*. The "*importance of sanitary regulations was to be illustrated by statistical facts,*" as the inspector continued his interviews with the regimental officers; the "*inspection of camp and quarters*" was a leading point also, and in another section of the instructions the Inspector was specially advised to set forth the fact that the "*prevention of disease is possible,*" and its "*suppression difficult and uncertain.*"

"Endeavor by every means in your power to remind the officers of these orders, and of the necessity of their strict obedience to them, to the safety and credit of the regiment. Explain to them that they are based upon a universal military experience, that disastrous consequences inevitably follow the neglect of such precautions as they are intended to secure. Let them know that, although the outbreak of malignant or epidemic disease in camps and quarters can be almost certainly prevented, it can seldom be suppressed, after having once broken out, by any measure, however energetic, and never without great destruction of life. Point out to them the various sources of mischief that are to be anticipated, and explain in what way defects in camp police, ventilation, drainage, cooking, &c. are sure to operate injuriously, especially in the destruction of the *esprit du corps* and *morale* of the soldier."

Then with the regimental surgeon the sanitary missionary must cultivate such professional fraternity and emulation as "will lead him to magnify his office," and, if necessary, he must "remind the surgeon that he becomes responsible for the existence and continuance of any unjustifiable sanitary condition pertaining to the camp, or to the management of the regiment, against which he does not perseveringly expostulate." The condition and wants of the regimental hospitals are to be inquired into, and, when desirable, the more important deficiencies and urgent wants are to be immediately supplied by requisitions upon the Commission's supplementary stores; "ambulances and ambulance stores" are to be examined, and the regimental surgeon urged to be fully equipped and ready for battle duty. And thus, in various ways, the faithful and hard-worked surgeon in the field has found the Sanitary

Commission his ever-present friend, defender, and helper ; while the negligent and reckless medical officer has learned to fear the expostulations and the merited rebukes of the faithful Inspector.

These instructions to the Inspectors comprise thirty-two sections, and include the leading subjects affecting the sanitary condition of soldiers in camp,—“Camp Sites,” “Drainage,” “Ventilation,” “Sinks and Offal,” “Disinfectants,” “Water,” “Sutlers,” “The Commissariat and the Quartermaster,” “Rations and Cooking,” “Bedding,” “Tents,” “Clothing,” “Frauds in Food and Clothing,” etc., etc. And, lastly, to give force and execution to all this labor of inquiry and inspection, the Inspector is to enter into frank “conference with the commanding officer,” and urge such improvements as appear to be practicable. In case of persistent “necessity of sanitary precautions,” the following instructions are to be pursued:—

“Address the proper officer on the subject in writing, stating the grounds of your advice. Take pains to do this in such a manner as not to cause irritation or give offence, and, at the end of the week, send a copy of your letter to this office, together with any answer which may have been given you.

“In visits subsequent to the first, all important changes which have occurred since previous reports should be noticed ; and especially it should be stated whether and how far advice previously given has been followed, and with what results.

“Whenever you see occasion, advise action which you think desirable to be taken by the Commission, or to be initiated at Washington.”

From ten to fifteen Sanitary Inspectors have been constantly engaged in this branch of the Commission’s work, since the summer of 1861 ; as far as possible, this has been a corps of specially qualified experts, and many of its present members formerly held commissions in the military medical service. It has been difficult, indeed, to obtain a sufficient number of suitably qualified medical men for the peculiar duties of this corps, and several of the best Inspectors that have entered the service have been physically broken down by arduous labor and exposures.

In the first report which the Commission made to the Secre-

tary of War,* in the autumn of 1861, the following statement is made respecting the Sanitary Inspectors and their labors at that early period of the war.

“It was indispensable that they should possess, not only scientific education and a special acquaintance with sanitary laws, but sufficient tact to enable them, though holding no official position or military rank, to perform their duties as agents of an organization unknown to the regulations of the army, without awakening jealousy of their interference as officious and intrusive. It was also necessary, in view of the fact that the Commission could afford to pay but moderate compensation to its employees, that they should be men actuated by a strong and disinterested desire to be of service to the country. . . . Very few camps have been visited in which important improvements have not been ordered, at the suggestion and in presence of the Inspector.

“The influence, however, which officers unconsciously receive through the mere direction of their attention to neglected duties, by the inquiries which the Inspectors have need to address to them, constitutes the chief part of the value of the services of the Commission. This, of course, cannot be specified and recorded. . . . The example of one regiment in reforming abuses and enforcing sanitary laws is very generally followed by others near it, and an emulation is excited among company and regimental officers, the beneficial effects of which have been noticed in many cases where an ill-regulated regiment has been transferred to the neighborhood of a cleanly, well-policed, thoroughly drained, and salubrious camp.”

In the Report from which we have here quoted it is stated that the Sanitary Inspectors had made full returns from more than two hundred regiments, and that the total number of separate reports of such regimental inspections amounted then, at the end of the first four months of the work, to more than twice that number. The Report further says: —

“The results [of these reports] are carefully tabulated, and suitable digests prepared by an accomplished actuary. The Commission is not without hope, if it should be enabled to continue its operations, eventually to lay before the country a body of military medical statistics more complete, searching, and trustworthy than any now in existence.”

* Sanitary Commission Document, No. 40. A Report to the Secretary of War of the Operations of the Sanitary Commission. 8vo. pp. 107.

How the Commission's Bureau of Statistics was organized, and what practical problems it solved, we will presently notice; but, that the reader may judge of the nature of the "returns" that were daily sent in to the central office by the Sanitary Inspectors, which constituted the basis not only of statistical inquiry, but of the requests and suggestions that were continually being made to the government, the following questions, as given in the Manual for Inspectors,* are here copied. These questions, as their number show, are extracted from different sections.

"83. Are the rations found sufficient in quantity?

"84. Are they generally considered good in quality, each of its kind?
If not, mention what is alleged to be poor.

"86. About how often is fresh meat served?

Fresh vegetables?

Desiccated vegetables?

"145. Is the regimental hospital in a house, temporary structure, or tent?

"146. If in a house or temporary structure, is it fairly adapted to its purpose?

"147. Is it fairly well ventilated?

"147ⁱ. How is it heated?

"147^{ia}. Is it kept clean?

"148. If in a tent, is it well drained?

"166^{xi}. What was the sickness and morality as per last monthly report?

"166^{xii}. What was the strength of regiment at that time?

"167. Is the general health of the regiment improving or deteriorating?"

The Inspectors engage in direct personal efforts for the immediate reform of abuses and the improvement of camp and hospital hygiene, wherever they go. And it is in such efforts that they are really most useful. Wherever wants are discovered, they are in duty bound to find out means to relieve

* Sanitary Commission's Document, No. 19. Form C.

The Inspectors' returns, as given opposite the questions, become available in the Actuary's Bureau of Statistics, as well as in guiding the secretaries in their official duty.

them. For the sick and enfeebled, they promptly order forward such supplies as the surgeons require ; to the camps that are exposed to malaria, they advise, and, when necessary, they offer supplies of the needed prophylactics ; while, throughout the long lines of our forces that occupy the scathed and destitute borders of the rebellion, far from planted fields, these faithful inquisitors against disease are unceasingly on the watch for the Protean outbreaks of scurvy. In their crusade against this scourge of camps and protracted campaigns, the Sanitary Commission has successfully laid the gardens of the great Northwest under contribution. With the strategic foresight of a veteran campaigner, — as he is, — Dr. Newberry, the Western Secretary, wisely gained possession of immense and fertile fields about Murfreesboro' and Nashville, just in the rear of the forces, and there planted in *hospital gardens* his strongly defensive batteries to guard against this most insidious enemy that has yet threatened our brave soldiers. During all the past year the Federal forces down the Atlantic coast have been menaced by that enemy, and, but for the continual watchfulness and promptitude of the Sanitary Inspectors, and the bountiful supplies of fresh vegetables which, upon their requisition and the request of army surgeons, the Commission has sent forward by every steamer to the army of the South, it may reasonably be doubted if our forces could have continued the siege of Charleston, or to-day have been in condition to prosecute an active campaign.

We shall again recur to this homely but life-saving warfare of the Sanitary Commission against the evil bred of the unvaried camp-kettle and "hard-tack," and it is mentioned here as an imperative function of one branch of the *Preventive* service. But it must be borne in mind, that the good which the Sanitary Commission has accomplished by its direct and immediate interpositions and supplementary work has been continually exceeded by the beneficent results of the power exerted by its example and influence upon the regular agencies or methods of supply and care for the soldier. To the honor of the generals in command, and the medical officers in the field, this fact is frankly, thankfully confessed by them, for they know too well that it is a chronic habit of commissa-

ries and quartermasters to find lions of difficulty in the way when unusual requisitions and extra demands are made upon their departments, and that the regular methods of meeting special wants are generally, and probably necessarily, slower than the immediate and expansible methods of supplementary supply that the Commission has adopted. It is due to the regular administrative service of our army, that it should have the praise of far surpassing in efficiency and promptitude the corresponding British service in the Crimean campaign. But that there is much in our army administration that cries for reform, is painfully evident from the single fact that its deficiencies have rendered vigilant and active efforts of the Sanitary Commission necessary to prevent scurvy from crippling our best *corps d'armées* while occupying vitally important points in the line of our military operations.

The Commission has steadily kept in view the duty of discovering and suggesting the proper remedies for these defects in the military system; and that its suggestions have been pressed with earnestness, and in the right directions, may be inferred from the fact that the fearless and faithful discharge of this duty is known to be the cause of whatever opposition the Commission has encountered in official circles.

The improvement of military hospitals has naturally received the continued and earnest attention of the Sanitary Commission, and no subject could more legitimately claim the services of sanitary science and preventive skill. Only the privilege of visiting and inspecting the hospitals was granted to the Commission; yet as the Sanitary Inspectors came to the hospital wards, not only with offerings of the material aid and special supplies which the sick and wounded might need, but also with the sentiments and suggestions of most fraternal and professional friendship towards the faithful medical officers, as well as with humane concern for the patients in their care, the opportunity for practical efforts by the Commission to improve the character and administration of the army hospitals, general, regimental, and temporary, has been very great; and from time to time the Commission has assumed such responsibilities in aiding the administration of the hospitals, as have placed the government and the people under lasting obligations.

Discreditable and unnecessary as it seems, it still is true, that military hospitals, in great campaigns, have proved to be sources of pestilent disease. Miss Nightingale has remarked, that, in hospital construction and administration, it is all-important that special care be taken that the patients are not *killed* by the hospital and its management. It was the overwhelming experience in this respect of the British army in the Crimea, that gave rise to the great reforms which are now in progress in hospital construction and management, and in all departments of army administration, in Europe. The influence of that grand illustration of the wasting and consuming power of disease in armies, and of the redeeming and triumphant power of sanitary works, was already, before our war, producing some excellent results in our civil hospitals and in the sanitary police of towns; but neither the military system nor the army surgeons of our country had become in any degree permeated by those marvellously practical teachings which Lord Herbert of Lea and Florence Nightingale had labored to present for the instruction and benefit of the civilized world. What the wants of the army hospitals were, and what the Sanitary Commission said of them and did for them, during the first summer of the war, will appear from the following abstract of a Report, by a special committee, adopted on the 29th of July, 1861:—

“But the principal want experienced by the sick was found by your committee to be clean and appropriate hospital clothing. But for the liberal forethought of the benevolent women of the nation, our soldiers would have been compelled to lie sick and wounded in the clothes in which they entered the hospital wards, and which, in many cases, had not been changed or even washed for weeks before. Many had been already supplied, and your committee had the satisfaction of seeing that every sick man in hospital was fully provided with a proper suit of clothing, by the authority of the Commission.

“No available provision being made by government for the washing of the clothing worn by volunteers on their entering the hospital, the committee secured the authority of the Commission for employment of laundresses for this purpose; so that, when the soldier is ready to leave the hospital and resume his duties, his clothing will be clean and fit for use.

“The services of a barber were also procured for the sick, and your committee can bear witness that he contributed not a little to their

cleanliness and comfort. Wire frames for the protection of wounded limbs from pressure of bedclothes were found to be wanted, and they were supplied.

“ Another subject was recognized by your committee as possessing much interest and importance ; namely, the provision of systematic and reliable means of identifying the remains of soldiers dying in the general hospitals, and of properly marking the graves in which they are interred, so that the reasonable inquiries of friends and relations may be properly answered. This matter was brought before the Commission, and referred to a special committee for immediate action.

“ Your committee venture to embody their conclusions in the form of suggestions, and would submit to the Commission, secondly, the propriety of recommending to government that hereafter, instead of hiring old buildings for general hospitals, they should order the erection of a sufficient number of wooden shanties or pavilions of appropriate construction, and fully provided with water for bathing, washing, and water-closets, and ample arrangements for ventilation and for securing warmth in winter, to accommodate from thirty to sixty each, and to be sufficiently distant not to poison each other. This suggestion embodies the latest and best views as to the construction of hospitals, and its adoption would save both lives and money.

“ If the present hospitals are to be occupied during the fall and winter months, some plan should be at once adopted and applied, by the competent authorities, to correct their architectural defects, to provide facilities for bathing and water-closets, to introduce water on each floor, and to separate the dead-houses from the wards occupied by the sick. Measures should also be taken to improve their ventilation, and for their thorough warming in winter.”

It is to the deserved and lasting credit of General M. C. Meigs, the Quartermaster-General of the army, that from the first he favored and aided the development of the improved system of military hospitals originally proposed by the Sanitary Commission. After the construction of two pavilion hospitals, during the first year of the war, from plans prepared in the Commission, the work of hospital reform was fairly inaugurated, and it is to the intelligent and prompt official action of General Meigs, and to the efficient administration of Surgeon-General Hammond, that the army now owes a system of pavilion hospitals that exceeds in extent and excellence any hospital system ever before seen.

During the year of battles that followed the capture of Fort Donelson, in February, 1862, there probably passed through the general hospitals not less than from 350,000 to 400,000 sick and wounded men, besides the much larger number who were treated in regimental hospitals or in the field. Hence, we can hardly overestimate the vital importance and the lasting benefit of this new and vastly improved system of hospital care for the brave men who, in ceaseless processions from camps and battle-fields, have passed through the wards of the hundreds of healthful pavilions. During the autumn and winter of the second year of the war, when the bloody fields of Northern Maryland and Virginia, and the long and stoutly contested line of malarious outposts along the Western river-borders of the rebellion, had crowded all the permanent hospitals, and populated hundreds of churches and other edifices, perilous for temporary use as hospitals, it was deemed expedient by the Commission to undertake a special inspection of all these hospitals permanent and temporary, with the aid of the ablest medical talent and experience which our large cities could afford.

This special inspection was begun early in the autumn of 1862, and continued until the summer of 1863, and in its performance the Commission had the services of more than sixty eminent physicians and surgeons from the principal civil hospitals of the country.

The magnitude and importance of this work in the general hospitals may be judged from the fact, that the wards inspected contained upwards of seventy thousand beds, and the number of patients visited during that half-year's inspection amounted to nearly two hundred thousand. The reports of the Inspectors during that period comprise more than four thousand written pages, and they contain the results of most careful observations and scientific study, the fruits of which will continue to benefit the sick and wounded of our armies until the war is ended.

After the passage of the new Medical Act, and the installation of the new Surgeon-General, in the beginning of the summer of 1862, the Sanitary Commission hoped to be able to withdraw from the field some of its more extraordinary and expensive agencies connected with the *Preventive* service, and

likewise to diminish its increasing responsibilities in the matter of *Relief* or supplementary supplies. But before the Surgeon-General and his corps of medical inspectors, under the new medical act, had been confirmed by the Senate, the great campaigns that had opened at Donelson and Shiloh, in the West,—at the mouth of the Mississippi, on the Gulf,—at Roanoke Island, Newbern, and the Sea Islands, on the coast,—and under General McClellan on the Peninsula, in Virginia,—while they promised triumphant success to our arms, had already threatened to overwhelm our Northern homes with unspeakable sorrow, and had roused irrepressible sympathies for the brave men who, by tens of thousands, in the early marches and battles of those campaigns, had fallen, to suffer unutterable woes from want of timely succor.

Between the 1st of March and the 1st of July of that year of battles, the demands upon the Medical Department of the army had been more than quadrupled. The new Surgeon-General, fortunately, was found equal to the occasion, but the multiplied exigencies of the five grand campaigns of our armies, all pressing at the same time, inevitably exceeded the largest resources and powers of the Medical Department, as constituted under existing laws, and also rendered it impossible for the Quartermaster's Department to respond with promptness and efficiency to the requisitions made upon it for the material care and necessary transportation of the sick and wounded. Upon the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Mississippi, the Sanitary Commission urged the preparation of, and furnished supplies for, hospital transports; and mainly through the agency of the Commission a system of floating-hospital transportation, most humane and munificent in its provisions, was put into operation, and became the means of saving a multitude of lives.

The medical history of the Peninsular campaign, and the story of the Sanitary Commission's "Hospital Transports,"* will furnish pages of deep interest in the history of the war; and the record is at every point interwoven with that of the other labors and achievements of the Commission. An army

* Hospital Transports. A Memoir of the Embarkation of the Sick and Wounded from the Peninsula, etc., etc. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1863.

of 130,000 men had been plunged into the mud-fields between the York and James Rivers, and as they pressed forward towards the rebel capital,—fighting and trenching, continually exposed to malaria, and suffering most excessive fatigue and want,—the Sanitary Commission endeavored to prepare for the constantly increasing crowds of sick and disabled that were daily turned back to the rear upon the Pamunkey, the York, and James Rivers. Though only supplementing the deficiencies of medical and administrative service, the supplies, appliances, and working corps it there provided made and entitled it to be considered one of the most efficient departments of medical and administrative service in that disastrous, but heroic campaign. Every witness of what the Commission effected during that period bears testimony to the good judgment with which its work was planned, and the success with which it was prosecuted, as well as to the terrible necessity that demanded its interposition. The following passage from a speech of Hon. Moses F. Odell, a member of Congress from Brooklyn, N. Y., sets forth the class of facts which impressed every visitor to the army upon the Peninsula.

“Before I had been long at the White House there came down from Fair Oaks some five or six hundred wounded soldiers on a train of cars, and then I discovered the vast resources and usefulness of this Commission. I found on board those steamboats numbers of ladies and gentlemen, ready to go to work with willing hearts and able hands to administer to the wants of those wounded and dying men. Now the government, I have no hesitation in saying, from the beginning of the war, have had a proper appreciation of the needs of the soldier, and have done all in their power; but under such circumstances as these the Commission was ahead of them,—hours and days ahead of the government in the supply of what was needed on that occasion. I joined them at once, enrolled myself as a working and active member, and remained there four days and nights, during which time there were 3,465 wounded men received, their immediate wants supplied, and necessary medical assistance furnished by the Commission, and they were then sent from there to the Washington and other hospitals. And had not these vessels been there with their bountiful supplies to make the soldier comfortable in his wants and sickness, the suffering would have been unspeakable.”

During a period so eventful, so terrible, as that of the sum

mer of 1862, it was manifestly impossible for the Sanitary Commission to do otherwise than enlarge, rather than retrench, its operations. To cease or diminish its humane ministrations would have been both cruel and criminal. Its work went on; every loyal home at the North demanded it; the Surgeon-General and all faithful and hard-worked army surgeons desired it to go on. The fact that its methods and measures had been studiously adapted to render such supplementary aid as it offered in an acceptable and most effectual manner, was appreciated by every general in command, and every right-minded medical director in the field.

The *Preventive* and inspectorial department of the Commission's work necessarily became completely interwoven with that of the *Relief* department during the campaigns of 1862. *Relief* became an agency of greatest *sanative* power and importance, and the supplies which the people furnished through the Commission's channels, or that were purchased with money by wholesale, became, by a most natural metonymy, "sanitary stores." During that period, as soon as the medical corps and sanitary inspectors, under the new Medical Act, had commenced service, the Commission's inspectors devoted themselves more particularly to the systematic and proper application of these "sanitary stores," and to such duties of a general nature as would leave the work of systematic inspection of camps and hospitals wholly to the new corps of regularly commissioned inspectors. But, as we have already mentioned, the Commission's work of systematic inspection of hospitals was resumed under new auspices during the succeeding autumn, and at the same time the "field work" of inspection assumed unprecedented importance as a crusade against the scurvy that was threatening all our armies. Thus, by force of circumstances, as well as by predetermined purpose, the strictly hygienic branch of service never had opportunity to degenerate into inefficient routine, but has been continued as a truly sanative, scientific, and practical department of army service.

Recently the Commission has enlarged and more thoroughly systematized this *Preventive* department, and, in view of the sad embarrassments that now afflict the medical bureau, it

would be impossible to conceive of a more vitally important service to our rapidly augmenting forces in the field, and to the national cause, than that which the Sanitary Commission may now render by perfecting and giving greatest possible efficiency to this department of its own most legitimate work. It is said that there has existed at the War Department a strange spirit of opposition to the Commission ; but this must not, need not, prevent the Commission from fulfilling its bounden duty to the soldiers who are gathering for the great campaigns which are to crush the rebellion. The people demand this from the Sanitary Commission ; and, unless Congress sees fit to enlarge and defend the Medical Department, the Commission must, so far as it is able, boldly fill the place of the regular service. In the army of the South, under General Gillmore, or in that of the Great Valley, under General Grant, the Sanitary Commission's inspectors, circulars, and advice possess indeed a moral power that scarcely needs military authority to enforce it.

During the last year and a half the Commission and the army have witnessed such excellent and positive results from the supplies of fresh vegetables that have been furnished upon the advice of the sanitary inspectors, — mostly at the Commission's expense, — that during the ensuing season the preparations for insuring timely supplies will exceed all precedent. Scurvy must be kept far from the lines of our armies, as they press forward into the insurgent States, away from the present bases of supply ; and it may be doubted if the Sanitary Commission can in any other way prevent so much sickness, save so much life and strength, as by resorting to measures that shall insure a sufficient supply of antiscorbutic vegetables and antiscorbutic care for the forces in front during the present year.

In the "Sanitary Reporter," a well-edited, eight-page quarto, published semi-monthly, under the auspices of the Commission, by its Western Secretary, at Louisville, the vital importance of the warfare against scurvy has been continually set forth, and the inspectors, in their correspondence, ring the changes upon *onions* and *potatoes*, occasionally varying with *cabbage* or *dried fruit*. The supplies of fresh vegetables which the Commission provided for the army of the Cum-

berland, and to the forces before Vicksburg, had no small influence upon the grand results that have crowned the campaigns of those armies. In an official report upon the subject of vegetable supplies, Dr. Frank H. Hamilton, a distinguished medical inspector in General Rosecrans's army, occurs the following statement : —

“ We find in the absence of vegetable diet the cause for a great part of the mortality of our troops, both after the receipt of wounds and from disease. . . . We fully believe that *one barrel of potatoes per annum is to the government equal to one man.* . . . In all the regimental hospitals, as well as the general hospitals, I found the Sanitary Commission had already furnished them with the vegetables they had called for, and which were needed for the sick, *so that in the hospitals none were dying from scurvy.*”

During the spring and summer of 1862 the Sanitary Commission found it necessary to provide and send forward vast supplies of fresh vegetables to the armies under General Grant and General Rosecrans ; to the former, even when closely investing Vicksburg during the month of June, and with transportation badly obstructed, the Commission's agents managed to get forward and distribute nearly six thousand bushels of potatoes, eight tons of dried fruits, thirteen thousand lemons, and large quantities of pickled vegetables and other antiscorbutics. At an earlier period in the spring, the sanitary inspectors anticipated the approaches of scurvy in the forces at Young's Point, Milliken's Bend, and elsewhere along the Mississippi, and, as Inspector Warriner emphatically remarks, the vegetables which the Commission there supplied modified history ! In like manner the army of the Cumberland was supplied even more abundantly, though insufficiently, in the spring and summer. The following passage from the “ Sanitary Reporter ” shows why and how this was done : —

“ Recently, when scurvy threatened our army, a commissary advertised for an adequate quantity of potatoes and onions, and no response was made. Nobody either had, or chose to become responsible for, the delivery of 50,000 bushels of potatoes, and a corresponding quantity of other vegetables ; but there were few families in the great West which could not spare from its store a peck, a bushel, or a barrel of vegetables, and so, *within a month, some six thousand barrels were donated,* and

an impending disaster was averted, the Commission furnishing a medium of communication between the people at home and their defenders in the field."

Besides the succulent vegetables and fruits of the seasons, that the hospital gardens in the vicinity of Nashville and Murfreesboro' supplied to the numerous hospitals in their neighborhood, there was an immense harvest of onions and potatoes,— of the latter more than 12,000 bushels,— so that when the battles of Chattanooga occurred, and our forces had been compelled for months to abstain from vegetables, the Commission was sending its surplus products from Murfreesboro' and Nashville to the hospital depots up the Tennessee; and, as soon as the railway connection was completed to the head-quarters of Grant's army, the eagerly longed-for antiscorbutics were again furnished in camps as well as hospitals from the Commission's depots.

During the past six months, the vast assemblage of hospitals within the defences of Washington, the field-hospitals at Gettysburg, and the entire sick population of General Gillmore's command, have been provided by the Sanitary Commission with full supplies of vegetables, and all other fresh provisions that could best be obtained from the markets of Philadelphia and New York. This is accomplished by means of the same system of *credit* as that by which general hospitals provide "extra diet," etc. for their patients in anticipation of a "hospital fund," to be accumulated in lieu of undrawn rations. The Commission's relief department furnishes the fresh supplies by the car-load daily, or by the regular steamships, and is wholly or partially reimbursed at the end of each month from the constantly accruing hospital funds of the several hospitals. The total expenditures of the Commission for such supplies, during the last three months of 1863, amounted to nearly \$120,000, a considerable part of which has been already reimbursed.

Such are the methods and means by which the Sanitary Commission conducts its *preventive* service, and subsidizes the principles and teachings of hygiene to the work of life-saving in war; and they show how these strictly sanitary works are aided by the supplementary supplies that have been continually

flowing from the people and their aid societies, through the well-ordered channels which the Commission has thus prepared. In those channels, and under such intelligent guidance, the home gifts of dainty viands, warm clothing of mothers' and sisters' handiwork, and whatever need be procured with money in the markets, become "sanitary stores" which directly and powerfully contribute to the maintenance of life and health in battle-worn and wounded men in the camps and in hospitals. But it is upon battle-fields and in the hospitals that the conjunction of the two departments of the Commission's work is most strikingly illustrated, and we must here notice the methods of *battle-field relief* which the Commission has adopted.

The insufficiency of means of succor that characterized all the earlier battles of the war made it the imperative duty of the Sanitary Commission to devise some practicable measures for rendering effectual relief to the wounded, and aid to the medical staff, upon occasions of great conflicts. This work was earnestly undertaken immediately after the great battles that gave us the Cumberland and the Tennessee Rivers, in the spring of 1862; but the horrors of those sanguinary combats, the woes that were witnessed in the Peninsular campaign, and the outcry for aid that marked the second tragedy upon the plains of Manassas, unfolded to the Sanitary Commission a class of duties which it must assume at any hazard and at any cost. Its "sanitary stores" and agencies of relief must be moved forward with the moving columns of our forces to the very field of combat. This plan was approved by commanding generals, and was at once carried into operation.

Upon the Western rivers the officers of the Commission had from the first endeavored to be promptly and well in advance, by means of the hospital transports, freighted with hospital supplies and with working corps of voluntary attendants for the care of the wounded, as was also done by the Commission in the Peninsular campaign; but when our armies had fairly gotten up with the enemy, and the smoke of battle had cleared away, the Commissioners and their agents, as they counted the wounded and looked at their means of succor, could but ex-

claim, "What are these among so many!" Yet in the working of the very cautious, insufficient, and tentative methods that had been adopted by the Commission previous to the opening of McClellan's campaign in Northern Maryland, the bottom of the sanitary treasury had become painfully visible to the executive committee, and the immense stock of "sanitary stores" was nearly exhausted.

The dark days of the national struggle had come, and in the faith that has continually given certainty to the future of our cause, the Commission gave its utmost resources, and resolved to extend its aid and multiply its means of succor as the armies were nerving themselves for their most desperate conflicts. With the broken and worn ranks of the forces that rallied and moved forward in pursuit of General Lee, in September, 1862, the Sanitary Commission — then in session at Washington — sent all the supplies and means of succor it could command. It purchased wagons and horses, and obtained details for independent transportation to accompany the moving columns with supplies for *relief*, at the same time methodizing a suitable scheme for the administration of needed succor to the ambulances and the men who should fall by the way, while all the storehouses and reserve stock of the Commission's supplies were emptied by the larger relief trains and car-loads that were sent forward to convenient depots along the extended flank of the army as it came into battle.

This, briefly, is now the established method of *Battle-field Relief*, which was fully inaugurated during the memorable campaign in Northern Maryland. It is now in operation, as far as practicable, in all our armies. What it has achieved for the relief of suffering, for the aid of the medical and surgical service, and for the mitigation of that wide-spread sorrow that follows the noise of our battles, surpasses the power of language to express. It will live in thousands of grateful hearts while the thrilling records of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Stone River, Perryville, Corinth, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga are narrated by the brave men who fought, and by friends who lost their sons and brothers, in those battles. The following passage, which we quote from a graphic report by Dr. Newberry, presents some idea of the comprehensive plan, and

the vigilant, effective, and merciful operation, of the present method of "Battle-field Relief." Dr. Newberry, as director of the Commission's operations in the Western field, was at Chattanooga, and, with supplies and trusty assistants well in hand and awaiting the combat, he was stationed where he could quickly ascertain the movements of forces and the wants of the wounded.

"Wednesday morning our flag floated from the summit of Lookout, and our forces advanced on the Rebel stronghold of Mission Ridge, from our right, left, and front. After much severe fighting on our left, in which Sherman's forces suffered very heavy loss, the Rebel intrenchments along the base of Mission Ridge were stormed by our advancing lines, and then began that perilous but glorious ascent of its slope of one thousand feet, at six different points, which so surprised and appalled the Rebel garrison, and has covered with glory the brave men who dared attempt it. After an hour of suspense, inexpressibly painful to the thousands who were merely powerless spectators, the summit was gained and held, the roar of the forty pieces of artillery which crowned it was suddenly silenced, and we knew that a great victory had been won.

"Two wagons had been secured beforehand, with which to transport stores to any point where they might be required; but no part of the battle-field being more than three miles distant from head-quarters, and ample provision having been made by the medical director for the immediate removal of the wounded to hospital, they were held in readiness to use, if needed, while Mr. C. Read and myself, with a small supply of stores, went over to the battle-field along the middle line of Mission Ridge, and Mr. Loomis went toward the northern end, to see if any help were required by the wounded of Sherman's corps. By midnight all the Union wounded men on that part of the field which we visited had been transferred to hospital, and such of the Rebels as remained in the houses to which they had been carried had received all the aid we could give them, and so at one o'clock we returned to the town. Just as we arrived, Mr. Loomis came in and reported that the wounded of the 15th Army Corps had all been gathered into the Division hospitals, but that their expected supplies had not arrived, and they were greatly in need of our assistance. A wagon-load of milk, beef, crackers, tea, sugar, stimulants, dressings, &c. was immediately despatched to them, and was, as may be imagined, of priceless value.

"Early the next morning, Thanksgiving day, Mr. Read and myself

visited the hospitals of the 2d, 3d, and 4th Divisions of the 15th Army Corps, situated three miles up the river. The 4th, containing the largest number of wounded (399), we found pretty well supplied, for the time being, with the stores we had sent up the night before; but these were rapidly disappearing, and, at our suggestion, another load was sent for and received during the day. The 2d and 3d Division hospitals, situated on the bank of the river, containing respectively 75 and 230 patients, had received up to this time no other supplies than such as had been carried in their medicine wagons, sufficient to meet the first wants of the wounded, and by this time almost entirely exhausted. Just as I was offering to Dr. Rogers, the surgeon in charge of the 3d Division hospital, the resources of the Sanitary Commission, one of the assistant surgeons approached and said to him: 'Doctor, what shall we do? Our supplies have not arrived, our men are lying on the ground, with not blankets enough to make them comfortable. We've no stimulants, or dressings, or proper food. Now, if the Sanitary Commission only had an agent here, we should be all right.' I was happy to inform him that the spirit he invoked had come at his call, and when I promised that in an hour's time he should have concentrated beef, milk, stimulants, dressings, fruit, vegetables, clothing, bedding, and some ticks stuffed with cotton, his satisfaction shone from every feature, and both he and the surgeon in charge spontaneously ejaculated, 'Bless the Sanitary Commission!' — an institution of which they had abundant experience on the Mississippi, where the kind and efficient ministrations of Dr. Warriner were remembered with pleasure and gratitude."

The statistics of the Relief department of the Commission, the invoices of goods received from the branches, the bills of supplies purchased, the records of supplies distributed to the hospitals, and the account of reserved and battle-field stock, present a complete and constantly revised record of the business details of this supplementary service. The footings of these statistics show how vast the work has become; and when studied in connection with the casualty returns of battles and the sick reports of the camps and hospitals, the true significance of such figures can be quickly appreciated. We find that, within ten days after the battle of Chattanooga, four thousand boxes and packages were sent forward to that field from the Commission's nearest depots; that at the same time two thousand more had been sent down the Mississippi; and that there

had previously been forwarded to the wounded of Chickamauga five thousand packages. To every recent battle-field the Commission has sent forward supplies for succor in the same way, and to the extent of its resources at the time; and as we count up the battles and sieges of the war, in which the wounded have depended largely upon this supplementary aid, we find an immediate answer to the question, What becomes of the "sanitary stores," and how is so much money used?

It is stated, upon good authority, that more than a hundred thousand Federal soldiers have been wounded in battle since the war began, and that disease has already brought into the military hospitals, general and regimental, *upwards of two millions* of cases. That the Commission's share in the work of providing for the wants of all these sick and wounded men has been both large and necessary, is acknowledged by all our best medical officers. And had the Commission extended their relief-work only to the general and regimental hospitals, the record of that service would still be a worthy and instructive one; but when we add the statistics of the battle-field relief-work, that record becomes clothed with the memories of the conflicts themselves. The President of the Commission has stated that "\$50,000 would not cover the cost of our whole service" (of supplementary supplies) "in the first two weeks after any one of our great battles; at Gettysburg it was \$75,000." Much of that expenditure was for supplies of various kinds purchased with money in the cities, and forwarded by express-cars and independent wagon-trains; sixty tons being fresh and perishable provisions that were sent in refrigerating cars; but it is not this estimate of the net money value of the invoices of supplies that best conveys to the mind an adequate idea of the nature and magnitude of this work of succor to the wounded. The long catalogue of the articles tells what wants exist and what relief was brought. One example in this work will justly apply to all the battle-fields. From the published records of relief-work at Gettysburg we quote a list of some leading articles which the Commission supplied to the field-hospitals there.

Drawers (woollen), 5,310 pairs.	Fresh Butter, 6,430 pounds.
“ (cotton), 1,833 pairs.	“ Eggs (chiefly collected for the
Shirts (woollen), 7,158.	occasion at farm-houses in Penn-
“ (cotton), 3,266.	sylvania and New Jersey), 8,500
Pillows, 2,114.	dozen.
Pillow-cases, 264.	Fresh Berries, 675 bushels.
Bed-sacks, 1,630.	“ Bread, 12,900 loaves.
Blankets, 1,007.	Ice, 20,000 pounds.
Sheets, 274.	Concentrated Beef Soup, 3,800 pounds.
Wrappers, 508.	“ Milk, 12,500 pounds.
Handkerchiefs, 2,659.	Prepared Farinaceous Food, 7,000
Stockings (woollen), 3,560 pairs.	pounds.
“ (cotton), 2,258 pairs.	Dried Fruit, 3,500 pounds.
Bed Utensils, 728.	Jellies and Conserves, 2,000 jars.
Towels and Napkins, 10,000.	Tamarinds, 750 gallons.
Sponges, 2,300.	Lemons, 116 boxes.
Combs, 1,500.	Oranges, 46 “
Buckets, 200.	Coffee, 850 pounds.
Soap (Castile), 250 pounds.	Chocolate, 831 pounds.
Oil Silk, 300 yards.	Tea, 426 pounds.
Tin Basins, Cups, etc., 7,000.	White Sugar, 6,800 pounds.
Old Linen, Bandages, etc., 110 bar-	Brandy, 1,250 bottles.
rels.	Whiskey, 1,168 bottles.
Water-Tanks, 7.	Wine, 1,148 bottles.
Water-Coolers, 46.	Ale, 600 gallons.
Fans, 3,500.	Pickles, 400 gallons.
Chloride of Lime, 11 barrels.	Indian Meal, 1,621 pounds.
Shoes and Slippers, 4,000 pairs.	Starch, 1,071 pounds.
Crutches, 1,200.	Codfish, 3,848 pounds.
Lanterns, 180.	Preserved Fish, 3,600 pounds.
Candles, 350 pounds.	Biscuit, Crackers, and Rusk, 134 bar-
Canvas, 300 square yards.	rels.
Mosquito Netting, 648 pieces.	Preserved Meats, 500 pounds.
Fresh Poultry and Mutton, 11,000 pounds.	

Methods for rendering temporary and special relief to sick and wounded at wayside depots in the vicinity of battle-fields, and to the patients *in transitu* in ambulances or upon the railways, have been improvised by the Commission to meet exigencies as they have arisen. Thus, on various occasions, temporary lodges have been established at convenient points for giving rest and succor to the wounded of ambulance trains, &c., as was recently done at Stevenson and in the mountain-passes approaching Chattanooga; and upon the more important routes of hospital transportation by railway, hospital cars

have been prepared and systematically attended. Upon the railway routes of Tennessee these railway ambulances have, from their first employment after the battle of Stone River, been wholly in charge of the Commission, and have done the entire work of hospital transportation in that important department. Recently, owing to the great demands upon the rolling stock of those railways, the military authorities authorized the purchase of three new and first-class passenger-cars, which the Commission has fitted with elastic beds and hospital appliances for the railway ambulance service ; and, for the sake of avoiding delays from lack of locomotives, the Western Secretary has, for the Commission, become the owner of a locomotive for the use of the hospital train.

Details of the various operations which conjoin the department of *Sanitary* service with that of *Relief* cannot be given within the limits of these pages, but the reader cannot fail to notice that, in a great variety of labors upon which the Commission has entered, these two grand divisions of its work and purposes are necessarily and happily conjoined and co-ordinate. It would be difficult to say whether the one or the other element, in this theoretical division of the work, predominates in such labors as we have been describing. And when, for nearly seventy-two hours previous to the terrific assault upon Fort Wagner, upon the night of July 18th, the Commission's Inspector, Dr. Marsh, with the cordial approval of the leader of the assault, held his brave detail of aids unflinchingly to the duty of supplying the storming party in front with nourishing food and beverages until they reached the fatal moat, and then himself led his heroic helpers in the humane and perilous work of rescuing the wounded, and at the same time supplying almost all the means of succor and comfort which those mangled soldiers received until they were brought to the general hospitals, sixty miles away, that succor and *relief* was the best, the only, *sanative* care those brave men could receive. By such beautiful illustrations, which have continually marked the war-work of our army, often upon a grand scale, yet ever regarding the individual wants of the sufferers as well as the general results to be reached, has the Sanitary Commission's first postulate been proved both true and practicable, — namely, that

"this war ought to be waged in the spirit of highest intelligence, humanity, and tenderness for the health, comfort, and safety of our brave troops."

But in order that the nature of the Sanitary Commission's department of *Relief* may be fully understood, it remains for us now to notice still more in detail its organization, methods, and practical working.

The fact that the Commission's branch of *General Relief* service is strictly a scheme of *supplementary supplies*, and mainly under the direction and advice of the Sanitary Inspectors, has been illustrated in the preceding pages. Its methods are simple, direct, and responsible, and its records exhibit all the exactness, verification, and care that would be looked for in an extensive and well-managed shipping and commission establishment. Its central depots are located at Washington, New York, Louisville, Philadelphia, and Boston, with important sub-depots in Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, New Orleans, and other cities; while in every department of the army, and at every important military rendezvous, there are disbursing depots, and with moving columns of the forces, and accompanying military expeditions, "flying depots" are maintained, and kept well forward with the troops.

These depots are in the immediate care of Relief Agents, who have been selected for the service with much care, and who are under the immediate direction of the Associate Secretaries and the sanitary staff of the Commission. Disbursements are made upon requisitions from medical officers of the army, or by special instructions from Sanitary Inspectors; and the day-book, ledger, vouchers, and balance-sheets of each depot exhibit the evidences of that faithfulness which should characterize the administration of such munificent bounties as the people have poured into the well-worn and ready channels of the Commission. And that this vast system of supplementary supplies, with all its cost of gathering, warehousing, invoicing, repacking, transportation, and the disbursement in detail, is economically conducted, appears evident from the fact which we find stated in the "Sanitary Reporter" respecting the Commission's relief-work in the West during the two years

ending September 1, 1863. After enumerating a long catalogue of leading supplies, — among which we notice the items of 49,141 bushels of potatoes, 46,807 pounds of concentrated milk, 497,365 pounds of dried fruit, 201,603 shirts, 113,329 pairs of drawers, &c., &c., — the report concludes with the following remark : —

“ A careful estimate of the cash value of stores known to have been distributed by our agents in the Western Department during the past two years, fixes it at TWO MILLION TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. The expenses attending their distribution have been THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, or *one and one half per cent* upon their valuation.”

The total value of the hospital supplies that have been contributed by the people through the Relief department of the Sanitary Commission previous to the 1st of November last, is officially reported to be upwards of seven millions of dollars, estimating the articles at wholesale market prices. Large expenditures of money are also required from time to time, for the purchase of certain staple articles of supply in this service. And, in addition to expenditures thus made by the central treasury, the local branches and auxiliaries often make large purchases, which, without delay or reshipment, are forwarded, under instructions from the Commission, directly to the points required. The facts relating to this subject are thus stated in a recently published document : —

“ The branches also purchase supplies on a large scale, especially in cases of emergency, as after a great battle. They have thus expended several hundred thousand dollars, the proceeds of which have gone directly to the relief of the army. The cargoes of ice, for example, sent to the hospitals of Morris Island and Hilton Head, by the Boston branch, at the expense of the central treasury, have been of inestimable value, not merely to the individual soldier, whose suffering they have alleviated, but to the country in expediting his convalescence and return to duty.

“ The general fund is used for like purposes. Up to December 1, 1863, the central treasury at New York has expended more than a quarter of a million in the purchase of hospital clothing, chloroform, medicines, stimulants, beef stock, farinaceous food, and other material for army relief.”

Here we discover, both how the golden gifts of California are expended, and how the munificent proceeds of the great sanitary fairs and the accumulations of the numerous branches of aid are employed. All these contributions are directly applied to the relief and succor of the brave men who are fighting our battles and pressing back the rebellion, and we think it must be regarded as one of the most admirable features of this whole system of relief, that it has induced such thorough organization, harmoniousness of purpose and plan, and promptitude of action, in the spontaneous sympathies and benevolence of the people. This entire scheme of relief and supplementary aid is "benevolence organized," and its operations are the intermingled works of patriotism, sympathy, and tenderest affection guided by sound wisdom. This great system of relief is continually furnishing the most direct and convincing testimony to the truth of the great principle first established by the labors of Lord Herbert and Florence Nightingale, that "the cause of humanity has become identified with the strength of armies."

Co-ordinated with the work of general relief, the Commission's methods of special relief give to this scheme of benevolence a remarkable completeness, and in these methods we see manifested the delicate and brotherly concern for individual cases of suffering which peculiarly characterizes this branch of the Commission's service as one of Christian philanthropy. Though it deals mainly with the wants of men whom sickness, wounds, or paroles of the enemy have withdrawn from active duty, it is necessarily the main source of aid, advice, and protection that can be found by thousands of most needy and friendless soldiers out of the army lines. It steps in with the needed advice and means of relief just where, under the rigid regulations of military rule, the army authorities leave the broken-down, furloughed, discharged, or invalided soldiers; and the effectual methods by which the Commission does this service have become so well understood and appreciated by the government, that the military authorities everywhere regard it as a means of great advantage to the army, and they express their cordial approbation and interest by acts of official recognition and aid to the work. The methods of this branch of

aid and succor are thus defined in the last report upon the subject : —

“ The work of the Special Relief Department is too various for complete classification. Every day brings out some new case for its intervention, differing from all that have preceded it. But its chief objects are as follows : —.

“ *First.* To supply the sick of newly arrived regiments such medicines, food, and care as their officers are, under the circumstances, unable to give them. The men thus aided are chiefly those not sick enough to have a claim on a general hospital, but who nevertheless need immediate care to prevent serious illness.

“ *Second.* To furnish suitable food, lodging, care, and assistance to men who are honorably discharged as unfit for further service, but who are often obliged to wait for several days before they obtain their papers and pay, or to sell their claims to speculators at a sacrifice.

“ *Third.* To communicate with distant regiments in behalf of men whose certificates of disability or descriptive lists on which to draw their pay prove to be defective, — the invalid soldiers meantime being cared for, and not exposed to the fatigue and risk of going in person to their regiments to have their papers corrected.

“ *Fourth.* To act as the unpaid agent or attorney of soldiers who are too feeble or too utterly disabled to present their own claim at the Paymaster's office.

“ *Fifth.* To look into the condition of discharged and furloughed men who seem without means to pay the expense of going to their homes, and to furnish the necessary means where the man is found to be true and the need real.

“ *Sixth.* To secure to soldiers going home on sick-leave railroad tickets at reduced rates, and, through an agent at the railroad station, to see that they are not robbed or imposed upon.

“ *Seventh.* To see that all men who are discharged and paid off do at once leave the city at which they receive their discharge, for their homes, or, in cases where they have been induced by evil companions to remain behind, to endeavor to rescue them, and see them started homeward with through tickets.

“ *Eighth.* To make men going home discharged, or on sick leave, reasonably clean and comfortable before their departure.

“ *Ninth.* To be prepared to meet, at once, with food or other aid, such immediate necessities as arise when sick men arrive in large numbers from battle-fields or distant hospitals.

"Tenth. To keep a watchful eye upon all soldiers who are out of hospitals, yet not in service ; and give information to the proper authorities of such soldiers as seem endeavoring to avoid duty, or to desert from the ranks.

"In all these arrangements the Commission and its branches receive practical support and aid from the Quartermaster's Department, which makes its beneficial work tenfold more effective."

That such beneficent work has deeply impressed the hearts of the tens of thousands who have directly received its benefits, and that it has a decided influence upon the patriotism and zeal of the country, is a fact most impressively illustrated in thousands of our Northern homes, whose invalid, anxious, and crippled sons have participated in the friendly and paternal aid and succor which this system of special relief provides. Hundreds of destitute invalids daily find shelter, food, and rest in its homes and its lodges. It renders timely and effectual aid to the wayside sick, the famished soldiers that have pined and suffered worse than death in the enemy's prisons, as well as to the ignorant, the misguided, and the victims of official neglect. In short, wherever the enlisted man or the disabled and needy soldier is found in want, distress, or error, when beyond the immediate control or supervision of military authority, there the Sanitary Commission recognizes a citizen soldier and provides for his special relief. Its methods are systematic and economical, yet as varied and expansible as the ever-varying wants for which they provide. In the words of a recent report, "there is hardly a service within the whole range of charity that has not been rendered our soldiers by this agency. And they must surely endure longer and fight better for knowing that they are thus watched over and aided by the people whose cause they maintain."

The vast extent of the more systematic work of this branch of the Commission's Relief department may best be estimated by the current records of the homes, lodges, and relief hospitals. These institutions now number twenty-five or more, and during the past year are reported to have accommodated an average of two thousand three hundred soldiers daily. The more important homes and lodges are located at Washington, Alexandria, Annapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Cairo, Stevenson,

Memphis, and New Orleans. And in a recent report we are informed that the total number of night's lodgings furnished at these places, in twelve of the cities, to October 1st, amounted to 206,570, and the number of meals provided was 602,656.

To these regular and permanent modes of *relief* are added a large number of temporary supply depots, with temporary lodges attached, scattered throughout the lines of our armies; and besides these are the offices for correction of papers and giving friendly advice and aid to invalids waiting their pay, &c. in each of the grand departments of the army. Under the devoted and humane superintendence of Rev. F. N. Knapp, these operations of special relief have assumed such completeness and fraternal simplicity as to give them rank among the most valuable and commended of all the Commission's works. But words can but very inadequately convey an idea of the spirit and the individual details of this philanthropic and incidental branch of the Commission's daily labors. To every mind, the methods and duties of this work will impressively illustrate the breadth, unity, and strength of those Christian sympathies upon which the work itself is based, and which have extended its beneficent ministrations, not only to the loathsome prison-houses of the enemy, but to our foes themselves upon battle-fields and in our own prisons. The writer of this article can never forget the manly acknowledgment and grateful expression of the deep convictions of fraternal unity that an intelligent officer of the Rebel army once made to him while recovering from his wounds upon the battle-field of Antietam. Disabled for life, and about to return on parole to his Southern home, he accompanied his parting farewell with grateful allusions to the comfortable garments and dressings that covered his wounded body, (all bearing the well-known stamp, U. S. Sanitary Commission,) and added, "Such treatment proves we still are brothers and may again be one people." And it will yet be seen in the history of our republic, and in the records of human progress, that the United States Sanitary Commission's works and purposes of relief and mercy have had an important mission in hastening the day when

"Man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be, and a' that."

Allied to the work of special relief, the Commission's "Hospital Directory" must be regarded as an equally significant expression and aid of that work. It furnishes a complete and daily revised encyclopædia of information respecting the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals, and at the same time provides the requisite offices and clerks for affording freely, both to patients and friends, all the information and benefit that such accurate and freshly gathered intelligence can impart. What Miss Nightingale attempted so tenderly to do for the patients that were under her daily care, and for the friends at home who anxiously made inquiry by letters, the Sanitary Commission has more successfully accomplished by means of its "Hospital Directory." This scheme was devised and ordered during the "dark days" in September, 1862, when the general hospitals contained a population of nearly a hundred thousand patients. And the Good Providence that gave the relief of "material aid" to the Sanitary Commission when, during those days of fearful anxiety and imperative duty, the treasury and supply depots became exhausted, brought at once the means to make the plan of the Directory complete and practicable. During the first year of its operations the Directory registered 513,437 names of patients in the general hospitals; and the total number of *inquiries* directly answered amounted to 9,362. Its central offices are at Washington and Louisville. It is not only a work of mercy and comfort, but its influence is so important upon the mental hygiene of patients in hospital and of friends in the homes they love, that its bureaus must be continued until returning peace shall have emptied the hospital wards, and made our homes joyous with returned fathers, husbands, and sons.

We might refer to various other methods of *relief* and *aid*, still further to illustrate the spirit and extent of this department of the Commission's work; but we must be content to point out the fact, that the greater number of the methods and special labors and expenditures of this entire service of relief have in view one common influence upon the government authorities, namely, the enlargement and better adaptation of its own methods and agencies for administering relief and aid to its soldiers when in distress; and, likewise, one common

result upon the needy men who receive such relief at the hands of the Commission, namely, the speedy succor and aid that shall most surely and quickly restore the disabled soldier to the ranks, or, if utterly disabled, bring him safely through perils to his home, or, if dying, administer such comfort as the heart of humanity requires. So vast and widely scattered have our armies become, that to keep this great system of relief in effective operation requires a vast expenditure of money; material, supplies, and personal labor. And it now remains for us to notice the means by which the Commission supplies and guards its treasury, and the methods and auxiliary agencies by which it obtains and accumulates supplies of "sanitary stores."

With manifest forethought of the practically economic bearings of preventive sanitary measures, the life insurance companies were the first and have continued to be among the most liberal contributors to the Commission's treasury. Immediately upon the organization of the Commission, the New York Life Insurance Company sent a spontaneous offering of five thousand dollars, and the New England and the New York Mutual Life Insurance Companies each gave three thousand, and the last has since swelled its gifts to the amount of ten thousand dollars. Other corporations have learned to give to the Sanitary treasury, and from churches, schools, public speakers, and voluntary associations the gifts have been timely and significant; while the individual contributions of private citizens have been like the rills that make the river. The *pro rata* of contributions received from the different cities and States varies according to the degree of intelligent interest in the Commission's work. The New England States have given to the central treasury about \$150,000, and the single State of New York has given a still larger amount. But the greatest marvel of munificent giving has been displayed in the golden States of the Pacific coast. California alone has sent nearly \$600,000, and from Nevada, Oregon, and Washington Territory about \$90,000 have been received. The treasury has already expended nearly a million dollars, and still keeps a small balance in hand for daily demands. The thorough organization and system that pervade all branches of the Com-

mission's work also prevail in the management of its funds ; and it is a fact not unimportant to its prosperity, that among the commissioners are men of long experience and of sound discretion in the management of important trusts.

But it is not in money that the people make their largest and best contributions in aid of the Sanitary Commission's work. They contribute a vast variety and amount of supplementary supplies, that money alone could not readily procure. Hospital clothing, fruits, and delicate viands are prepared in all our households, and, through the agency of Aid Societies and the branches of supply, all these products of home material and home affections are directly forwarded to the sick and needy men for whom they were prepared.

The organization and complete adaptation of the system of home efforts, local Aid Societies, and Auxiliary Branches, by means of which the Relief department of the Sanitary Commission is kept steadily in operation, has not been a work of chance. We have already noticed the intelligent and forecasting counsels and inquiries that preceded the institution of this scheme of organized effort. That these streams of succor would burst forth from every neighborhood and village was foreseen by the men and women who devised the original plan for systematizing the means and methods of voluntary aid, and upon the success of that plan was staked the existence of the Commission's department of *Relief* ; but, more than this, it was clearly foreseen that, unless such voluntary offerings found a central and well-organized system, with methods studiously adapted to military requirements, the sick and wounded would fail of the timely succor which their homes would send to them. Hence it became a most imperative duty to prepare and put into effectual operation some adequate scheme for co-ordinating and guiding these benevolent efforts and wishes of our homes. The Sanitary Commission has accomplished this, and that the principal contributions of supplies for the soldiers' succor now seek these channels, and, through the great branches of supply which are situated in our principal cities, glide directly and certainly forward to the central depots and to field relief stations, is a fact not less creditable to the intelligence of the people than to the wisdom of the Commission.

For more than two and a half years this business of systematic supply has been going on through the Sanitary Relief department, until finally its plan and methods have become the popular habit. But while, by replenishing the local treasuries of the branches, the receipts from sanitary fairs are promising the means of greatly augmenting the total supplies to the Commission's depots, the central treasury becomes burdened with increased rates of expenditure, for which the branches are not directly responsible. It was an appreciation of this fact that led the Boston branch to assign, from the proceeds of its great fair, \$50,000 to the Commission's treasury, and, following that example, New York and Brooklyn are to turn the proceeds of their fairs in the same direction; but in most instances the branches directly expend, for materials of supply, all the funds they receive. Such simplicity and singleness of purpose and such heartiness of co-operation are truthful expressions of the united will of a free people in the support of the national cause and the succor of its defenders.

The people of European nations, in recent wars, have endeavored to mitigate the woes of their wounded and sick soldiers, but their efforts have been unmethodized and comparatively ineffectual. The "Times Fund," and Miss Nightingale's depots for the Barrack Hospital and the Crimean fever-huts, will ever be gratefully remembered; the *arobas* of wheat and fresh vegetables which were contributed by thousands of Russian families for the relief of their soldiers during the Crimean campaign, and the good services of voluntary *comités* that were spontaneously established in the villages of France for the reception and forwarding of contributions of wines, hospital supplies, &c., for the succor of their soldiers during their last two campaigns, were beautiful and striking manifestations of the humane sympathies of mankind, and of the affectionate ties that even war cannot sever; but it has been made the humane mission and the patriotic duty of the United States Sanitary Commission to show how such spontaneous and benevolent aid may be wholly systematized, and rendered immediately and steadily effectual and acceptable.

Unity of plan, earnestness, patriotism, great humanity of purpose, and a broad and positive *nationality of sentiment and*

influence, are inscribed upon all the methods, counsels, suggestions, publications, and labors of the Sanitary Commission. The very conception and birth of its plan were quickened and shaped by this spirit of Federal loyalty and nationality; and at the present hour the Commission is an exponent of the sentiment of nationality that has become triumphant at the North, and which is utterly uprooting from among us the sectional individualism that threatened to impede the purposes and patriotism of our people. Every woman and child in our Northern homes has insensibly caught the spirit of the Commission's work while contributing their handiwork for succor through the branches of the Relief department; and the soldier himself is made happily conscious of this spirit of national unity whenever he receives sanitary relief.

The sketch we have here presented of the Sanitary Commission's scheme of organization and effort must of itself furnish the only comment that need be made upon the official services and personal qualifications of the gentlemen who constitute the Board of Commissioners.

In our account of the Sanitary Commission we have necessarily omitted many points of interest in its history and operations, but the outline which we have here given of the methods and nature of its labors will convey a correct idea of the means by which its purposes are accomplished. Without precedents, without military authority, and only having official *permission* to render aid as a voluntary and advisory organization, the Commission has devised and executed its various methods of operation in a forced and absolute dependence upon the simple moral power of its own intelligent and humane endeavors to mitigate evils which it had not official authority to prevent, or certainly control. How much greater service to the army and the country such a Commission would accomplish, or would have accomplished, if endowed with adequate authority to give full effect to the improvements it advocates, may not readily be estimated. With such official and military privileges as it has, and with the moral and material resources which it commands, this Commission has acquired at least such powers as enable it to carry on a systematic plan of preventive or hygienic service in all our camps and hospitals, and at the same time give all

the *relief* that voluntary aid can render to the sick, wounded, or needy soldiers in the field, in hospitals, or by the wayside. But after such experience as the government has had of the decided utility of the measures devised and recommended by the Sanitary Commission, and with the instructive example of the British government in its appointment of the Crimean Sanitary Commission *with powers*, there certainly would seem to be no good reason why the Sanitary Commission of our army should not receive similar instructions and powers to those that the British Commission received. In Lord Panmure's warrant to the Crimean Commissioners they were directed, among other things, to

"State fully and urge strongly, for adoption by the proper authorities, everything that you believe will tend to the preservation of health and life."

"It is important that you be deeply impressed with the necessity of not resting content with an order, but that you see instantly, by yourselves or by your agents, to the commencement of the work, and to its superintendence day by day until it is finished."

Not having been endowed with such official authority as that with which the Crimean Commission was clothed, the Sanitary Commission of our army has naturally resorted to all practicable measures to bring about needed reforms by means of faithful and persistent representations and proofs of their importance, nature, and extent, and the most available means for their accomplishment, while at the same time, with such privileges and authority as could properly be claimed under the warrant creating the Commission, it has given to our troops such benefits as the knowledge, skill, and humane purposes of the Commissioners could give, and has made the spontaneous offerings of the people thoroughly effective in aid of the national cause, and in the succor of its sick and wounded defenders.

The practicability of such a scheme of voluntary labors must have been doubted — was doubted — by some persons, both in the army and out of it; by some the Commission has been opposed; but its continued operations during a period of two and a half years have demonstrated its worth and usefulness. And it is due to the history of the Commission, and also to its

reputation for intelligent and advanced views in regard to the work it originally marked out and is now accomplishing, to state that the entire correctness of those views, and the desirableness of such work, have been very strongly corroborated by the conclusions reached in the deliberations of the International Conference,* that recently met at Geneva for the discussion of questions similar to those involved in the design and labors of the United States Sanitary Commission. The President of the Conference, General Dufour, said: "To be truly useful to the cause of humanity, we must, instead of indulging the vain hope of suppressing wars, endeavor to render their consequences less terrible if possible, and lend our aid effectually to those whose duty it is to give assistance to the sufferers." The representative of the king of Prussia, Dr. Löffler, a chief medical officer of the Prussian army, also expressed the sentiments of his government in the following language: "The history of the great contests in our times has demonstrated that, when war is about to break out, it is impossible for the official authorities to provide the means of succor with sufficient rapidity, and even in a sufficient degree, for all possible exigencies. It is to the charitable support and co-operation of the public that we must address ourselves to surround the victims of the contest with all the care to which they have a well-deserved right, and which the heart of the true philanthropist must demand for unfortunate fellow-beings." This was the spirit of the conference, in which the nations of Europe were represented by able and experienced military officers and other public men.

Inspired with enlightened and patriotic zeal for the welfare of the vast armies that our country has summoned to the field, and having most fortunately united in its work experienced and earnest men, who will steadfastly and intelligently maintain the cause they have undertaken, the United States Sanitary Commission, deliberately marking out its own plan of humane and supplementary work, has, from the necessities and incentives of the occasion, given the first great and suc-

* Conférence Internationale pour étudier les Moyens de pourvoir à la Suffisance du Service Sanitaire dans les Armées en Campagne. Convened at Geneva, Switzerland, Oct. 26, 27, 28, 29, 1863.

cessful example in providing against the insufficiency of the sanitary service in armies.

The wide range and great magnitude of the Sanitary Commission's work have been inevitable results of the vast increase of our forces, and of the original and fixed policy of the Commission, "to secure for the men who have enlisted in this war that care which it is the will and the duty of the nation to give them."

This work has been, and must continue to be, rendered practicable by the hearty support and sympathy of our free and loyal people. It is a necessity which an advancing civilization has laid upon their hearts and their hands. And while in our peaceful homes and in our popular armies it is joyfully accepted as a labor equally of patriotism and of love, the influence of this great scheme of beneficent labor has gone out to all other civilized nations as an impressive illustration of the progress of that humane Christian spirit which is augmenting the popular appreciation of the sacredness of human life and human sympathies, and which shall yet elevate the brotherhood of states and nations above the very causes of war.

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117 Washington Street, Boston.

THE AMERICAN REVIEW

OF THE

PROGRESS OF THE

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FOR THE

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1850

BY

JOHN R. ALLEN

OF THE

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Published by

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117 Westman Street, Boston